

Barriers/Berms

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| Objective: | To prevent entry of oil into a sensitive area or to divert oil to a collection area. |
| Description: | A physical barrier (other than a boom) is placed across an area to prevent oil from passing. Barriers can consist of earthen berms, trenching, or filter fences. When it is necessary for water to pass because of water volume, underflow or overflow dams are used. |
| Applicable Habitat Types: | At the mouths of creeks or streams to prevent oil from entering, or to prevent oil in the creek from being released into offshore waters. Also, on beaches where a berm can be built above the high-tide line to prevent oil from overwashing the beach and entering a sensitive back-beach habitat (e.g., lagoon). |
| When to Use: | When the oil threatens sensitive habitats and other barrier options are not feasible. |
| Biological Constraints: | Responders must minimize disturbance to bird nesting areas, beaver dams, or other sensitive areas. Placement of dams and filter fences could cause excessive physical disruptions, particularly in wetlands. |
| Environmental Effects: | May disrupt or contaminate sediments and adjacent vegetation. The natural beach (or shore) profile should be restored (may take weeks to months on gravel beaches). Trenching may enhance oil penetration and quantity of contaminated sediments. |
| Waste Generation: | Sediment barriers will become contaminated on the oil side and filter fence materials will have to be disposed of as oily wastes. |